

News from U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC)

Assistant to the Democratic Leader

Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget

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Spratt Budget Wins Praise on Capitol Hill

Veterans applaud Spratt; 192 House Members back S.C. Rep's plan

WASHINGTON – The House Democratic budget that U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) unveiled this week drew wide support on Capitol Hill, winning 192 votes Thursday night.

The Republican budget, which the House finally approved, won by only three votes after much wrangling and arm-twisting among members. The vote on the Spratt budget was 192-236. The vote on the Republican budget was 215-212.

Spratt is the Assistant to the Democratic Leader and the Ranking Member on the Budget Committee.

His budget projected balance in 2010 – two years earlier than the House Republican budget – and with \$821 billion less public debt.

Unlike the House Republican budget, Spratt's budget did not cut domestic spending below the level needed to keep pace with inflation and did not contain any cuts in programs like Medicare and veterans health care.

Spratt's budget also provided \$528 billion in new funds for a serious Medicare prescription drug benefit – \$128 billion more than the Republican budget. "And we don't take a dime out of Medicare or a dime out of Medicaid to pay for it," Spratt pointed out.

In addition, Spratt's budget included a plan to bring immediate stimulus to the economy through job creation, tax cuts, and aid to the states.

Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi praised Spratt's budget in a statement on the House floor. "I commend Ranking Member Spratt for his masterful leadership in developing a Democratic budget that creates jobs – in fact, one million new jobs this year," she said. "The Spratt proposal balances the budget, sparks economic growth, and funds the priorities of working families: education for their children, prescription drugs for their parents and grandparents, health care for our veterans, and resources for the police and firefighters who protect our communities."

Veterans also praised Spratt's budget. The American Legion called it "a much better approach toward reaching a balanced budget." Four other groups – Disabled American Veterans, AMVETS, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars – concluded that the Spratt budget "represents a solid step forward in meeting the very real needs of veterans."

Cuts to veterans programs in the Republican budget drew sharp criticism from Spratt, who called the cuts "deep and outrageous." Said Spratt: "At a time when people are waiting up to six months just to get into their veterans hospital, Republicans cut \$15 billion from the veterans disability compensation program and \$14 billion from veterans health care. We restore these cuts fully."

Spratt also said his budget provides \$60 billion more than House Republicans provide in education; \$41 billion more for the environment, natural resources, and the Clean Water Act; and \$34 billion more for homeland security.

"Democrats," Spratt said, "also provide \$35 billion more than the Republicans provide for an array of programs which have really worked, like community policing, a program that has cut the violent crime rate in our country."

"We do all of this while balancing the budget by 2010 and providing growing surpluses in 2011-2013."

"Democrats offer a real choice and a stark contrast. Our budget gets to balance, and it gets there with balanced priorities."

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